

country knife (*pissan kathi*) in his left hand, which he directs towards the mouth, he pours the tamarind juice over this knife with his right hand three times, which dribbles down the knife into her mouth, and she drinks it. In the absence of a brother, some other near relation officiates. After she has swallowed the tamarind juice, she is asked to pick one out of several packets of different grains placed before her. The grain in the packet she happens to select is supposed to declare the sex of the child in her womb. The whole ceremony is wound up by a sumptuous feast to all the relatives and friends of the family. 843
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"*After Ceremonies.*—At delivery, women of the barber caste officiate as midwives. In some localities, this duty is performed by *Vêla* caste women. Pollution is observed for fifteen days, and on every day, the mother wears cloths washed and presented her by a *Vannatti* or woman of the Vannan * caste. On the fifteenth day is the purificatory ceremony. As in the case of death pollution, a man of the Atikkurissi clan sprinkles on the woman a liquid mixture of oil, and the five products of the cow (*pancha gavya*), with gingelly seeds. Then the woman takes a plunge-bath and sits on the ground, near the tank or river. Some woman of the family, with a copper vessel in her hands, takes water out of the tank or river, and pours it on the mother's head as many as twenty-one times. (I am not aware if this practice is universal, though it certainly obtains in parts of South Malabar and even in North Travancore.) This done, she again plunges herself in the tank or river, from which she emerges thoroughly purified. 846
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844
[227]

"It may be noticed that, before the mother proceeds to purify herself, the new-born babe has also to undergo some rite of purification. The babe is placed on the naked floor, and its father or uncle sprinkles a few drops of cold water on it and takes it in his hands. The superstitious believe that the temperament of the child is determined by that of the person who thus sprinkles the water. All members of the *Taravâd* observe pollution for fifteen days immediately following the delivery, during which period they are prohibited from entering temples and holy places. [828]

"*First Birthday Celebration.*—The twenty-seventh day after the child's birth or the first recurring day of the star under which it was born marks the next important 846
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* Over a great part of Malabar she would, however, be of the *Tiyan* caste.

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613 event. On this day, the *Kārnavan* of the family gives to
553 the child a spoonful or two of milk, mixed with sugar
[574] and slices of plantain. Then he names the child and calls
it in the ear by the name* three times. This is followed
by a feast to all friends and relatives, the expenses of
which are necessarily met by the father of the child.

853 "Chôrûn or First Meal of Rice.—As is usual with the
852 Nayar every event is introduced by a ceremonial. The
613 first meal of rice partaken by the child forms no excep-
tion to the rule. It must be remembered that the child is
not fed on rice for some time after birth; the practice
being to give it flour of dried plantain boiled with
jaggery. There is a particular variety of plantain,
known as *kunnan*, used for this purpose. The staple
food of the Malayali, rice, is given the child, for the first
time, generally during the sixth month, and is attended,
[8] of course, with some ceremonial. Necessarily, the
astrologer fixes the day; and at the auspicious hour, the
child, bathed and adorned with ornaments (which it is
the duty of the father to provide) is brought and laid on
a plank. A plantain-leaf is spread in front of it and a
lighted brass lamp, placed near. On the leaf are †
served a small quantity of cooked rice—generally a por-
tion of the rice offered to some temple divinity—some
tamarind, salt, chillies, and sugar. Then the *Kārnavan*
or the father, ceremoniously approaches and sits down
facing the child. First, he puts in the mouth of the child
a mixture of the tamarind, chillies and salt; then some
rice; and lastly a little sugar.

[301] "Thenceforward, the ordinary food of the child is
rice. It is usual on this occasion for relatives (and
especially for the '*bandhus*,' such as the *Ammâyi* or
'uncle's wife') to adorn the child with gold bangles,
rings and other ornaments. The *chôrûnû* or rice-giving
ceremony is, in some cases, preferably performed in
some famous temple, that at Guruvâyûr being a favourite
one for this purpose.

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35 "Child-birth—Position during.—When a Nayar woman
is about to be delivered of a child, she is placed in a
reclining position on a low wooden couch (*Kottotam*),
her back supported by a companion, generally an old
woman. The *kottotam* is very like, if not identical with,

* In some places, the child is named only in the sixth month on the
chôrûn day.

† In some places, all the curries, etc., prepared for the attendant feast
are also served.

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pregnant woman, taking a sword, generally kept for this purpose, and holding it in the left hand points it to her mouth. The juice is then poured on it in such a way as to fall by drops into her open mouth. After this, one of the women of the *evangal* group smears the body and head of the pregnant woman with coco-nut oil and takes her to the tank. She is also required to choose one from a collection of different grains, and it is believed you can say from the choice what the sex of the child is going to be.

The significance of the ceremony seems to be twofold. First, it is the official notification to the allied families as well as to the local village groups of the fact that a woman is lawfully pregnant in the house. The intervention of the *Anamāri* or the mother's brother's wife is supposed to show that everything is as it ought to be. It is, therefore, in the first place merely a social announcement. Secondly, the actual ceremony with the sword is supposed to have the effect of making the child a warrior, and it is believed to impart the virtues of bravery, manliness and honest dealing. It is, therefore, in the classification of Van Genepp, a rite direct, sympathetic, automatic and positive. The tamarind juice is believed to create sensitiveness and honour. It is a "contagionist" rite. Whenever a man shows cowardice, the question that is asked as a mark of contempt is: "Were you not born after *Pulicudi*?" or "did not your mother drink the tamarand juice?"

After the *Pulicudi* there are many prohibitions which a pregnant woman has to respect. Of this the most important is the absolute sexual tabu which dates from the *Pulicudi* to forty days after the childbirth. Other tabus are mainly connected with food and are mostly "contagionist" positively or negatively. Thus the woman is not supposed to take very warm food, as it might scorch the head of the child; she is not supposed to eat much hot food (chilis, pepper, etc.), because it might put out the eyes of the child. There are no definite rules about these, but every mother in her desire to do the child no possible harm keeps herself away from all doubtful matter.

After the birth of the child there is a mild pollution (as compared to the strong untouchable pollution caused by death) in the family. This pollution does not carry any disabilities except the prohibition to enter any sacred precincts. On the fifteenth day there is a purificatory ceremony, but there are no festivities or celebrations connected with it.

The mother and the child are accommodated in a special room which no man may enter. Unmarried girls, unless they are little children, are also not allowed to go near. The child, of course, can be seen by all after the cutting and burning of the umbilical cord. It is handed round to the father and other interested relations. No kind of food except the mother's milk is given to it, and, if the mother died at the birth of the child, it is generally given the milk of some relations or even of outsiders who have children of almost the same age. The person whose milk the child thus drinks, though she be an outsider, is considered equal to its own mother, and her children are considered the same as own brothers. There is a story of a Nayar

853 king who as a child lost his mother and was therefore fed on the milk of an attendant
 846 woman, refusing to punish her son after repeated acts of treason on the ground that
 608 an ocean of milk flowed between them which a drop of blood would pollute for ever.

852 On the twenty-eighth day the child undergoes two ceremonies. The first is
 301 called *Erupathettu Kettuka*, or the "Tying of the twenty-eighth day." Before that
 789 day the child is not allowed to wear any ornaments. On the twenty-eighth day a
 silver or gold belt, or a mere cord with an ornament in the shape of a heart or a laurel
 leaf at the front, is tied to the waist of the child. The laurel leaf was most certainly
 meant as a charm in ancient days, while now it is nothing more than an ornament.
 The waist-belt occasionally has attached to it amulets made sacred by the repetition
 of *mantras* or magical formulæ over it. Such amulets are worn for the purpose of
 preventing disease and keeping the child safe from the demons and other evil
 spirits.¹

553 After this comes the name-giving ceremony. The astrologer announces the star
 787 under which the child is born and presents the horoscope. Then he mentions the
 initial letters of the names. Each star has generally two or three letters, and the
 whole of Sanskrit and Malayalam can be drawn upon for the names of deities begin-
 ning with those letters. The choice is really very wide, even with the most difficult
 initial letters.

852 The child is not supposed to be carried out of its mother's family till the sixth
 602 month. Then, on an auspicious day it is taken to the father's house (if the father
 431 is a Nāyar) by the mother, with some tokens of respect to the father's sister. These
 [824] presents generally are tobacco leaves (always a mark of respect among the Nāyars),
 betel, etc. The father's family generally gives a certain sum of money for the
 expenses of the coming ceremony.

852 These proceedings are preliminary to the ceremony of *Choru Koda*, or the giving
 262 of rice. For the first six months the child is given only the cooked flour of dried
 plantain fruits. Rice, which is the chief food of the Nāyars, is strictly prohibited
 [123] before the *Choru Koda*. As a boy of fourteen or fifteen, I have many times officiated
 [613] in this ceremony, on one occasion as a member of the father's family and on others as
 a member of the maternal *Tharawad*. What is done is that the child is taken to
 the temple by its mother, accompanied by some women of the *Enangu* group, together
 with a male representative from the father's house (if the father is a Nāyar) and
 [782] one from the mother's own family. There is an offering to the god of the temple
 [783] in the form of rice cooked with milk and sugar, and all the party, after purifying

[241] ¹ The question of origins is very difficult, yet we cannot pass without noticing the idea
 [114] that the loin cords are the beginnings of dress. Professor Wilhelm Wundt, in his well-known book
 on *The Elements of Folk Psychology*, has shown conclusively that it has no reference to the
 development of clothing, but is entirely magical in its purpose (pp. 86-87). The prevalent custom
 among the Nāyars supports this view. The custom can be understood only in relation to the
 general beliefs about cord-magic and the efficacy of amulets attached to waistbands.

843
[602] The juice dribbles down the knife into her mouth, and she drinks it. In the absence of a brother, some other near relation officiates. After she has swallowed the tamarind juice, she is asked [824] to pick one grain out of several packets of different grains placed before her. The grain in the packet is supposed to [574] declare the sex of the child in her womb. The whole ceremony is wound up by a sumptuous feast to all the relatives and [787] friends of the family. The *enangan's* wife at the time pours oil over the head of the pregnant woman. If the oil flows on the left side, it predicts the birth of a female; if on the right side, a male.

844 When a Nayar woman is about to become a mother, she is placed in a reclining position on a low

Childbirth.

wooden couch (*kattôdom*), her back supported by a companion, generally an old woman. The *kattôdom* is very like, if not identical with, the couch on which the Nayar woman has her oil bath. The surface of it is sloping, the higher end being where the head is laid, and it is scooped out so as to suit the curvatures of the body lying flat. Lying on her back, the thighs are stretched wide apart. Very often she holds in each hand a rope suspended from the ceiling by way of support. The child is received by a woman of the barber caste, who generally officiates as midwife, and in some places this duty is performed by a woman of the Vêlan caste.

846 Pollution is observed for fifteen days, and on every day, the mother wears cloths, washed and presented her by *Vannôthi* (a woman of the washerman caste). On the fifteenth day is the purificatory ceremony. As in the case of death pollution, a man of the Athikurussi clan sprinkles on the woman a liquid mixture of oil, and the five products of the *êow* (*panchagavyam*) with gingelly seeds. Then the woman dips herself in a tank or river or sits on the ground near the bank, and a maid servant pours on her head the water from a vessel as many as [184] twenty-one times. This practice is not universal, though it certainly obtains in the State and in some parts of South Malabar and Travancore.

846 • It may be noticed that, before the mother proceeds to purify herself, the new born baby has also to undergo some rite of purification. The baby is placed on the bare floor, and its father or uncle sprinkles a few drops of cold water on it

and takes it in his hands. The belief is, that the temperament of the child is determined by that of the person who thus sprinkles the water. All the members of the *tarawid* observe pollution for fifteen days immediately after the delivery, during which period they are prohibited from entering temples and holy places. 846 852 [828] [613] [793]

First birth-day celebration.

The twenty-seventh day after the childbirth or the first recurring day of the star under which it was born, is an important day, on which the *karanavan* of the family gives to the child a spoonful or two of milk mixed with sugar and slices of plantain fruits reduced to a kind of pulp. Then he names the child calling it in the ear by name, three times. In some places the naming ceremony takes place in the sixth month on the *Chorinnu* day, i. e., on the day of feeding. This is followed by a feast to all friends and relations, the expenses of which are met by the *karanavan* of the *tarawid*. The child is not fed on rice for some time after birth, the practice being to give it the flour of dried plantain boiled with jaggery. There is a particular variety of plantain known as *kunnan* used for this purpose. Well-to-do parents in these days give Mellin's food. The staple food, which is rice, is given to the child for the first time, generally during the sixth month, and is, of course, attended with some ceremony. Necessarily, the astrologer fixes the day, and at the auspicious hour, the child is bathed and adorned (which is the duty of the father), is brought and laid on a plank. A plantain leaf is spread in front of it, and a bright brass lamp is placed near. On the leaf are served a small quantity of cooked rice, generally a portion of the rice offered to some temple divinity, some tamarind, salt, chillies and sugar. Then the *karanavan* or the father ceremoniously sits down facing the child. First he puts into the mouth of the child, a mixture of tamarind, chillies and salt, then some rice, and lastly a little sugar. Thenceforward, the ordinary food of the child is rice. The ceremony is, in some cases, preferably performed in some famous temple, that at Guruvayur being a favourite one for this purpose. A few annas is given to the priest, who gives a small quantity of the food offered to the deity, with which the child is fed. 553 [853] [613] 553 [613] 853 852 853 [613] [778] [782] [465]

775 time. At the period of puberty and after child-birth women
 [881] are especially liable to the attacks of these aerial beings.
 ● (846) Charms and incantations, offerings and sacrifices, are the most
 [789] requisite to counteract the evils that demons do, and iron
 [782] rings, iron staffs, and leather shoes, are some of the specifics
 that help to keep the demons at a distance.

[787] They make their abode chiefly in the palmyra and *pála*
 trees, but some of them occupy even dwelling houses. Others
 take the shape of human beings, while yet others possess
 human beings.

775 Their name is legion, and they exist by the offerings of
 782 their votaries and their tormented victims. Against the machi-
 [776] nations of these demons, the sorcerers and exorcists bring to
 [791] bear the influence of their special guardian deities who in turn
 must be propitiated with offerings before they can be called
 upon to use their beneficial strength. In the case of the evil
 [783] spirit of him who has died an unnatural death, a Brahman
 magician purifies the spirit by means of certain ceremonies
 called *Tilahóma* (an offering of sesamum seeds to *agni* or fire).
 [789] A Chendus Nambuthiri presides at such ceremonies and trans-
 fers the spirit to an image of gold, silver, or wood which is
 afterwards placed in a Vishnu temple or enshrined in a small
 building put up for that purpose, there to rest in peace.

771 In the State, temples are dedicated to various demons,
 346 the chief among them being the Avanangáttil Cháttan in
 775 Tripprayar. The temples dedicated to the small-pox demon
 [753] correspond to the *Péy Kóvils* or devil temples of the Tamil
 [796] Districts. In these temples are to be found the instruments
 and symbols of demon worship, the dancing sticks or wands,
 the priests' garments, tridents, etc., whilst in others there is
 nothing save the images of demons. There is also an officiat-
 793 ing priest, who is the devil driver and the devil dancer, and
 791 who at times even becomes a *Velichapád* inspired to communi-
 cate to the votaries, who consult him in times of illness and
 calamity, the wishes and intentions of that particular demon.

771 To a Hindu all organic life is sacred, and his creed is
 225 Worship of animals and plants. not to injure any living thing, while among
 the animals worshipped by him the cow occu-
 pies the first place. The cow is *Kdmadhénu*, the giver of all
 things, and hence whenever a cow is approached, it is touched

105 There is a small community of Jews in Cochin, divided into White,
563 Brown, and Black, the last named being the most numerous. Other
1095 Kerala residents are foreigners such as Canarese, Tamils, Arabs, and
Europeans.

105 Untouchability has been made a penal offence by the present Indian
564 Constitution and there is undoubtedly a tendency among the more en-
1783 lightened in the country to combat its evils and attempt to eradicate it
from modern Hindu society. On the other hand, the religious minded
(and there are many) maintain that since the Constitution is a secular
one and allows full freedom of religious belief and practice, the legisla-
tor cannot interfere in questions of caste and untouchability, as these
have to do with the religious law and structure of India. The fact is
that, today, untouchability is not what it was, but it cannot be said either
that it has been done away with altogether. A visitor to Kerala is cer-
tainly immediately made aware of this, as many traditional views on
what constitutes intercaste pollution and what does not are still very
much in evidence. Thus, although a member of the artisan caste, a
1084 Kammalan, perhaps no longer pollutes those above him in the hierarchy,
264 atmospherically, at twenty four feet as he used to do, it is nevertheless
unthinkable that he should sit down to a meal of cooked rice with a
1463 Nambudri, or even for that matter with a Nayar. The aboriginal Nay-
484 adis who still live off begging and hunting may possibly "come into
1084 town" now and not have to keep off the roads for fear of polluting other
castes merely by being seen within a distance of seventy four feet, but
they are not for that admitted to a would-be reformed Indian commu-
nity in which no distinctions of caste, creed and colour are made any
longer; in fact, they themselves, probably out of some sort of perverse
attachment to their powers of polluting, refuse to be rehabilitated - as
has been attempted by the former government of Travancore - and
prefer to carry on with their traditional way of life.

It can thus be safely said that pollution of the higher castes by the
lower is very much believed in and guarded against, even in Kerala
today. Menstruating women, and also those who have given birth, are
1841 still considered to be unclean for a period, varying with the people to
846 whom they belong. And the various kin groups, of which every indiv-
614 idual is a member among the Hindus of Kerala, will equally be con-
846 sidered unclean and polluting for a certain amount of days - diminishing
1065 in number in inverse proportion to the height of the caste - after a birth
or a death has taken place.

000 Respect towards a superior, towards a god, towards a respected par-

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on her head, and lets it trickle down two or three hairs to her navel, where it is caught in a plate. Then the girl and her brother, holding hands, dig a hole with the charakkōl and pisankatti, and plant the tamarind branch in the nadumittam, and water it. Then the juice is administered. Until she is confined, the girl waters the tamarind branch, and offers rice, flowers, and lighted wicks to it three times a day. When labour begins, she uproots the branch."

"At delivery," Mr. Balakrishnan Nāyar writes, "women of the barber caste officiate as midwives. In some localities, this is performed by Vēlan caste women. Pollution is observed for fifteen days, and every day the mother wears cloths washed and presented by a woman of the Vannān [or Tiyan] caste. On the fifteenth day is the purificatory ceremony. As in the case of death pollution, a man of the Attikurissi clan sprinkles on the woman a liquid mixture of oil and the five products of the cow (pañchagavya), with gingelly (*Sesamum*) seeds. Then the woman takes a plunge-bath, and sits on the ground near the tank or river. Some woman of the family, with a copper vessel in her hands, takes water from the tank or river, and pours it on the mother's head as many as twenty-one times. This done, she again plunges in the water, from which she emerges thoroughly purified. It may be noted that, before the mother proceeds to purify herself, the new-born babe has also to undergo a rite of purification. It is placed on the bare floor, and its father or uncle sprinkles a few drops of cold water on it, and takes it in his hands. The superstitious believe that the temperament of the child is determined by that of the person who thus sprinkles the water. All the members of the taravād observe pollution for fifteen days following the delivery, during

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846 which they are prohibited from entering temples and
 [613] holy places." It is noted by Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar
 [844] that the first act done, when a male child is born, is to
 [828] beat the earth with a cocoanut leaf, and, if the issue is a
 female, to grind some turmeric in a mortar, with the
 object, it is said, of removing the child's fear.

553 In connection with post-natal ceremonies, Mr. Bala-
 [846] krishnan Nāyar writes further that "the twenty-seventh
 [821] day after the child's birth, or the first recurring day of
 [613] the star under which it was born, marks the next impor-
 [574] tant event. On this day, the Karanavan of the family
 gives to the child a spoonful or two of milk mixed with
 sugar and slices of plantain. Then he names the child,
 and calls it in the ear by the name three times. This
 is followed by a feast to all friends and relatives, the
 expenses of which are met by the father of the child.
 852 With the Nayar, every event is introduced by a cere-
 853 monial. The first meal of rice (chorūn) partaken of
 by the child forms no exception to the rule. It must be
 remembered that the child is not fed on rice for some
 time after birth, the practice being to give it flour of
 dried plantain boiled with jaggery (crude sugar). There
 is a particular variety of plantain, called kunnan, used for
 this purpose. Rice is given to the child for the first
 [787] time generally during the sixth month. The astrologer
 fixes the day, and, at the auspicious hour, the child,
 bathed and adorned with ornaments (which it is the
 duty of the father to provide) is brought, and laid on a
 plank. A plantain leaf is spread in front of it, and a
 lighted brass lamp placed near. On the leaf are served
 a small quantity of cooked rice—generally a portion of
 the rice offered to some temple divinity—some tamarind,
 salt, chillies, and sugar. [In some places all the curries,
 etc., prepared for the attendant feast, are also served.]

Then the Karanavan, or the father, ceremoniously⁸⁵² approaches, and sits down facing the child. First he⁸⁵³ puts in the mouth of the child a mixture of the tamarind,^[613] chillies and salt, then some rice, and lastly a little sugar. Thenceforward the ordinary food of the child is rice. It is usual on this occasion for relatives (and especially the bandhus, such as the ammayi, or 'uncle's wife') to adorn the child with gold bangles, rings and other ornaments. The rice-giving ceremony is, in some cases preferably performed at some famous temple, that at Guruvayūr being a favourite one 'for this purpose.' It^[782] is noted by Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar that the rice-giving ceremony is usually performed by taking the^[553] child to a neighbouring temple, and feeding it with the meal offered to the deity as nivadiyam. In some places, the child is named on the chorūn day.

Of ceremonies which take place in infancy and child-⁸⁵²hood, the following account is given in the Gazetteer of⁸⁴⁶ Malabar. "On the fifth day after birth, a woman of the⁵⁶⁴ Attikurissi or Mārayan caste among Nāyars, or of the barber caste in the lower classes, is called in, and purifies the mother, the other women of the household, and the room in which the child was born, by lustration with milk and gingelly oil, using karuga (*Cynodon Dactylon*) as a sprinkler. Her perquisites are the usual niracchayeppu (1 edangazhi of paddy and 1 nazhi of uncooked rice) placed together with a lamp of five wicks in the room to be cleansed, and a small sum in cash. A similar purification ceremony on the 15th day concludes the pollution period. In some cases, milk and cow's urine^[386] are sprinkled over the woman, and, after she has bathed,^[824] the Mārayan or Attikurissi waves over her and the child two vessels, one containing water stained red with turmeric and lime, and one water blackened with powdered charcoal.

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- 852 powdered charcoal. During this and other periods, a
 564 characteristic service called mattu (change) has to be
 rendered by people of the Mannān caste to Nāyars, and
 to other castes by their proper washermen, who may or
 [844] may not be Mannāns. On the day of birth, the Mannātti
 brings a clean tūni (cloth) of her own, and a mundu
 (cloth), which she places in the yard, in which she finds
 the accustomed perquisites of grain set out, and a lamp.
 An Attikurissi-Nāyar woman takes the clean clothes, and
 the Mannātti removes those previously worn by the
 mother. Every subsequent day during the pollution
 period, the Mannātti brings a change of raiment, but it
 is only on the 7th and 15th days that any ceremonial is
 observed, and that the Attikurissi woman is required.
 On those days, a Mannān man attends with the Mannātti.
 He makes three pradakshinams round the clean clothes,
 the lamp, and the niracchaveppu, and scatters a little of
 the grain forming the latter on the ground near it, with an
 obeisance, before the Attikurissi woman takes the clothes
 indoors. This rite of mattu has far reaching importance.
 [626] It affords a weapon, by means of which the local tyrant
 can readily coerce his neighbours, whom he can subject
 to the disabilities of excommunication by forbidding the
 washerman to render them this service; while it con-
 tributes in no small degree to the reluctance of Malayāli
 women to leave Kērala, since it is essential that the mattu
 should be furnished by the appropriate caste and no other.
 852 "On the twenty-eighth day (including the day of
 birth) comes the Pālu-kudi (milk-drinking) ceremony, at
 which some women of the father's family must attend.
 [591] Amongst castes in which the wife lives with the husband,
 [564] the ceremony takes place in the husband's house, to
 which the wife and child return for the first time on this
 day. The usual lamp, niracchaveppu and kindi of water,